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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 002294

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/01/2019  
TAGS: AORC IR MARR PARM PGOV PREL RS SU UP  
SUBJECT: SENATOR MARGELOV ON COOPERATING, IRAN,  
AFGHANISTAN, SUDAN, UKRAINE

Classified By: Ambassador John Beyrle. Reason: 1.4 (b), (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. In a September 2 meeting with Ambassador Beyrle, Federation Council Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Mikhail Margelov said Russia is hesitant to work outside the P5 plus 1 format when discussing possible sanctions against Iran. Margelov invited Ambassador Beyrle to present U.S. policies in more detail in a Federation Council Committee meeting and cited other areas, Ukraine aside, where the U.S. and Russia could increase cooperation. End Summary

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Iran: No Traction on Sanctions  
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¶2. (C) Margelov sidestepped suggestions of possible sanctions against Iran outside the P5 plus 1 framework, and stated that he believed sanctions only led to corruption. He added that Russia did not have major economic investments in Iran; sanctions involving the economies of countries like China and Japan would carry more weight. Margelov stressed that the P5 plus 1 is working effectively and agreed that Tehran would get the message only if the U.S., Russia, EU and others continued to stick together. Margelov dismissed possible alternative arrangements, such as sending Iranian LEU to Russia and Argentina for enrichment. He also suggested that Iran would be a good topic for Presidents Obama and Medvedev to discuss personally.

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Invitation to Discuss U.S. Views  
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¶3. (C) Margelov said the "reset" and the July Obama visit had changed the atmosphere of the relationship. To build further on that, he invited Ambassador Beyrle to speak to a Federation Council Foreign Policy Committee meeting on September 21 and promised to invite Council members from other committees such as Agriculture and Defense. Margelov framed the meeting as an excellent opportunity for the Ambassador to frame U.S. views and policy objectives with Russian policymakers prior to Presidents Obama and Medvedev's meeting on September 23.

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Continuing Bilateral Momentum on START  
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¶4. (C) Margelov agreed with the Ambassador that a new START agreement was possible by the end of the year and assured Ambassador Beyrle that the Federation Council would move quickly to ratify it. Margelov stressed that he wanted the positive momentum in our bilateral relationship to continue and welcomed increased contact with his counterparts in the U.S. Senate.

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Afghanistan: Let's Continue Cooperating

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¶ 15. (C) Margelov viewed Afghanistan as another area where cooperation between the U.S. and Russia has been fruitful and that Moscow was ready to do more to assist. In response to the Ambassador's comments on Afghanistan, Margelov said that many Russians respected that NATO is resolving problems that directly affect Russia. He added that Moscow is ready to do more in Afghanistan, such as training army and law enforcement officers. He affirmed that despite opposition among some members, the Federation Council would pass the lethal transit agreement, and did not think publicity over the inaugural flights would have any negative effect.

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Africa: Health, Security, Sudan Present Opportunities  
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¶ 16. (C) Margelov, an Arabic speaker and Middle Eastern expert, said that Africa, and Sudan in particular, presented issues where Washington and Moscow could cooperate "outside both of our backyards." The Ambassador and Margelov agreed that now is a unique time in our bilateral relationship where we could effectively work together in Africa, particularly on health and security issues.

¶ 17. (C) To encourage security, Margelov is organizing a conference on Sudan on October 6-7 in Moscow where he hoped to impress on Sudanese and South Sudanese leaders the importance of implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Sudan, he said, could otherwise become another failed African state that the international community would need to

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deal with. He has invited a wide range of foreign diplomats and international experts, including U.S. Special Envoy Scott Gration, and a number of other U.S. representatives.

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Ukraine: Breaking Up is Hard to Do  
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¶ 18. (C) In response to an inquiry on relations with Ukraine, Margelov smiled, shook his head, and replied that the Moscow's relationship with Kyiv is very emotional and irrational. Many Russians, Margelov continued, believed that Ukraine is "more Russian than Russia," and that it was hard to accept that Kyiv is distancing itself politically from Moscow. Moscow, however, had learned from its past mistakes and President Medvedev did not want to interfere in Ukraine's internal politics the way Moscow had during the Orange Revolution when it openly backed Party of Regions leader Viktor Yanukovych. Margelov reiterated his view that Moscow cannot trust any of Ukraine's political leaders.  
Beyrle